

# **LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System Long-Range Plan for Library Service 2013/14 to 2015/16**

## **Introduction**

The public library system in Leon County is a well-loved community resource for all.

In 2009, as part of a local economic stimulus plan, the Leon County Board of County Commissioners began a library improvement project that affected four of the system's five branch libraries and established a sixth branch. The projects expanded two branch library buildings; replaced a cramped storefront branch with a new, LEED-certified branch library building; added a new branch library to an established Leon County community center; and initiated an innovative reuse project involving the complete renovation of another storefront library and the addition of a Leon County community center in a 20-year old shopping plaza that Leon County purchased. The Library's long-range plan for 2010/11 to 2012/13 focused on planning, preparing for and establishing library services in these newly expanded spaces. The library improvement project is now completed.

This long-range plan, for 2013/14 through 2015/16, emphasizes the popular and well-loved services that our community expects from the library system. This plan also recognizes the ascendancy of the digital world: news, information, government information, social services, education, employment opportunities, entertainment, shopping and personal communication have moved to the online world. In addition, the Library recognizes that reading is important, that people enjoy the library setting as a community place, and that a wide variety of print materials continues to be vital to readers of all ages.

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners has instituted a bi-annual strategic planning process. Beginning with the Board's annual retreat, specific County priorities are established and implemented through strategic initiatives. Department-level strategic plans, including the Library's, are established with business plans that implement the Board's priorities and initiatives. The Library's Long-Range Plan for Library Service aligns with and supports the Board's Quality of Life Strategic Priority (Q8): *Maintain and enhance our educational and recreational offerings associated with our library system, inspiring a love of reading and lives of learning.*

This plan has been developed with input from library staff, library users' comments, and a focus group. Library staff members receive comments in person, by phone and email, through the library website and online catalog, the library's yellow comment cards and, occasionally, in the U.S. mail. The focus group, composed of all of the members of the Library Advisory Board, facilitated by a program specialist from the State Library of Florida, was held on June 11, 2013, to gather information and ideas for the plan.

Library managers decided that this long-range plan should encourage staff throughout the entire library system to improve services offered and to make sure that services established in the expanded and new library spaces are high-quality and consistent. User demands and

expectations, the Library's business plan and comments from the focus group point in this direction as well.

The goals are the same as those of the previous plan, while the objectives emphasize technology, the library website and catalog, social media and achieving consistency throughout the library system. Providing excellent customer services—the WOW! factor that Leon County emphasizes in its core practices—is all-embracing.

In the first and third years of the long-range plan, the Library plans to conduct a user satisfaction survey, which will be repeated in the third year of the plan. Results will be used in planning and adjusting services, and then as a check to judge the success of changes.

The Library continues to compile statistics that track performance such as circulation, computer uses, questions answered, materials cataloged, visits to the library, and programming. Performance measures are an indication of the effectiveness of library programs. Library users are quick to let library staff know what they like and dislike, offer comments and suggestions, and library staff members encourage this interaction. Staff members follow library trends, anticipate needs as well as demands, and implement changes to improve services where possible and appropriate.

**Library mission:** The LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System enriches the community by inspiring a love of reading, providing a dynamic resource for intellectual, creative and recreational pursuits, and enabling residents to live a life of learning.

**Library vision:** Our community discovers the joy of reading, the energy of ideas and the power of information together in the library.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal 1: Stimulate Imagination**

Library users are offered a wide variety of materials when they visit the library or library website. Library staff members assist users of all ages in making selections in a variety of formats.

Objectives:

1.1 New materials are displayed prominently where library users can easily peruse them at every visit.

1.2 Materials are attractively displayed and easy to find in all locations.

1.3 The Library website and online catalog encourage users to discover new authors, materials and topics.

1.4 New materials are available for reserve in advance, and are available to users by the "street date."

1.5 Social media is effectively utilized to highlight new and special materials related to current events and topics of interest.

## **Goal 2: Satisfy Curiosity and Offer Resources for Decision-Making**

Library users of all ages find information on topics of personal, work- and school-related interest. Resources are available that help library users understand and evaluate benefits, risks and alternatives as they make decisions.

Objectives:

2.1 Library resources, from print materials to the library website, are up-to-date, accurate and reliable.

2.2 Resources are selected to meet anticipated community interests and demand. Library staff members seek outside resources of information and help users engage with experts in the community.

2.3 Reference and information services are provided efficiently, effectively and courteously. All staff members strive to uphold Leon County's Core Values in customer service.

## **Goal 3: Connect to the Online World**

Free Internet access, including Wi-Fi, is available throughout the library system.

Objectives:

3.1 Library staff members continuously review online information resources and receive information and training so that they can help members of the community understand, evaluate and use the full extent of information and services available through the Internet.

3.2 Library staff members help users navigate the Internet and locate information and services that they need.

3.3 Library users receive assistance and instruction in using a variety of electronic devices to access information, both individually and in classes.

3.4 The Library and Leon County Management Information Services work together to monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of technology equipment and services.

3.5 The Library website is available 24 hours a days and offers an inviting and dynamic resource for library users.

## **Goal 4: Create Young Readers and Support Success in School**

Learning and language development from birth through adulthood is vitally important. Library programs and attractive materials encourage parents and caregivers to read to children. As children learn to read, staff members encourage them to develop a love of reading independently. Interesting, up-to-date materials in all formats, including online resources, encourage creativity, reading for pleasure and academic success in children and teens.

### **Objectives:**

- 4.1 The importance of early literacy, the development of a love of reading and success in school are the basis for the selection of print, nonprint and online resources for children and young adults.
- 4.2 BabyTime and Story Time programs are presented weekly for children from birth to age 5 and their parents and caregivers.
- 4.3 Children and teens find, with the assistance of library staff members, resources for homework help in print, nonprint and online.
- 4.4 Annual systemwide Summer Reading programs offer varied and exciting reading options and programs for all ages.

## **Goal 5: Support Adult Literacy and English-Language Study**

The Literacy Program supports adults who wish to learn to read, adults who wish to improve their own literacy skills as well as those of the children in their families, and adults who wish to improve their English-language skills.

### **Objectives:**

- 5.1 Literacy staff members work with volunteer tutors and community partners to ensure that adults and their families who seek literacy services receive timely, appropriate and consistent assistance.
- 5.2 Programs to recruit, train and support volunteers to work with adult learners are held regularly.
- 5.3 Adult learners receive tutoring appropriate to their learning styles and are encouraged toward their goals. Their achievements are recognized.
- 5.4 Tutors and learners have appropriate meeting spaces available to them at designated library locations.

## **Goal 6: Provide a Comfortable Place to Visit**

All libraries in the system are attractive, safe and comfortable places that people enjoy visiting. Library users find busy as well as quiet spaces and approachable service points.

- 6.1 Library service desks and resources are easy for all to find and use.
- 6.2 Library spaces are comfortably and appropriately furnished for all ages, with spaces for quiet reading, browsing through books and other materials, Internet access, meeting and programs, conversation or study, viewing displays and interacting with staff members.
- 6.3 The Library and Leon County Facilities Management work together to ensure that library spaces are clean and in good repair.
- 6.4 Library Outreach Services take library services and resources to those who cannot visit the Library. Vehicles are clean and well-maintained by Leon County Fleet Management.
- 6.5 Library volunteers are placed appropriately, welcomed by library staff members and supported by Leon County Volunteer Services.